DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 890 PS 015 628

TITLE	Grass Roots Networking for Primary Education: Case Studies: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Bangkok (Thailand). Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.
PUB DATE	85
NOTE	47p.
AVAILABLE FROM	UNIPUB, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017 (No price quoted).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; *Delivery Systems; *Educational Cooperation; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Resources; Foreign Countries; *Inservice Teacher Education; Primary Education
IDENTIFIERS	Japan; *Networking; Philippines; Sri Lanka; Thailand

ABSTRACT

This monograph describes inter-institutional network structures in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Japan, and the Philippines which were implemented to improve educational delivery systems at the primary level. Chapter 1, an overview, discusses the similarities and differences in three examples of networks in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. In the overview, comparisons are made with regard to six aspects of the programs: (1) background and rationale of the network structures; (2) objectives; (3) organizational structure; (4) linkages; (5) monitoring and evaluation; and (6) the innovations effected by the networks. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 respectively, describe Thailand's school cluster/educational resource center system, the Philippines' system of delivering teacher training through school learning action cells, and Sri Lanka's cluster school project. Chapter 5 briefly describes Japan's teacher-opperated interinstitutional network, an approach to in-service teacher development involving teacher study circles. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED267890

APEID

Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development

Grass Roots Networking for Primary Education

Case Studies

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Thailand
Sri Lanka
Philippines
Japan

PS 015628

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Maria
LaoSunthara

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

APEID Study Group Meeting on Inter-institutional and Other Co-operative Networking Structures, Bangkok, 6–17 November 1984.

Grass roots networking for primary education; case studies: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan. Bangkok, Unesco, 1985.

40 p. (Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development)

1. PRIMARY EDUCATION – NETWORKS – ASIA. 2. NETWORKS – PRIMARY EDUCATION – ASIA. I. Unesco. Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific. II. Title. III. Series.

372.95

© Unesco 1985

Published by the
Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 1425, General Post Office
Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Printed in Thailand

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Unesco concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

BKA/85/OPE/383-1200

PREFACE

In recent years a variety of grass roots level structures have evolved which aim at mobilizing inter-institutional support for educational development, particularly for providing professional support to schools. Examples of such structures are cluster schools, decentralized learning resource centres and mobile training arrangements.

To know more about these and similar other structures, a Study Group Meeting on Inter-institutional and other Co-operative Networking Structures was convened at the Unesco Regional Office, Bangkok on 6-17 November 1984. The meeting was attended by nine participants from eight countries namely; Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, two resource persons from Thailand and two observers from Papua New Guinea who reviewed, discussed and analyzed networking structures in these countries in an effort to identify ways of strengthening the existing structures and suggesting alternative types which can be developed.

The existing networks were studied in terms of how they came to be initiated, their organizational structures and modes of operation, the innovations they introduced, and the degree of participation they elicited from different educational personnel.

Among the activities in the Agenda for the Study Group Meeting were in-depth field studies of school clusters and a co-operative study of networks in operation.

The monograph includes papers describing three of the structures discussed at that Study Group Meeting. The papers in this publication were submitted by persons requested earlier to write on the structures and are not entirely the same as those read at the meeting. However, additional information and insights drawn from the meeting have been used to qualify some points in the earlier papers.

Exemplars of network structures providing support to schools which are considered in this publication, are the School-cluster-cum-educational-resource-centre system in Thailand, the School Learning Action Cell as a teacher training delivery system in the Philippines, and the pilot cluster school projects in Sri Lanka. A paper on the teacher operated inter-institutional network in Japan through teacher study circles completes the set of four papers.

This monograph was written as a companion volume for the APEID publication, 'Mutual Co-operation for Schools Development', the Report of the Study Group Meeting convened at the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, from 6-12 November 1984.

CONTENTS

Chapter One	:	Overview	1
Chapter Two	:	The school cluster system – Thailand by Rung Kaewdaeng	8
Chapter Three	:	The school learning action cell: an experence in networking – Philippines by Dionisio V. Abitong	20
Chapter Four	.	The school cluster pilot project – Sri Lanka by Sterling Perera	30
Chapter Five	.	Teacher study circles in Japan – teacher operated inter-institutional network by Shojiro Tamura	37

Chapter One

OVERVIEW

The three inter-institutional network structures described in this monograph reflect a common concern of the three countries – Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines – to deal more effectively with the problem of improving the education delivery system through improved learning programmes, sustained upgrading of teacher competences and skills, reduction of disparities in resources among large and small schools, and promotion of teacher participation in all activities aimed at the improvement of teaching and learning.

Clearly evident is the deliberate attempt to foster co-operation, sharing and participation among teachers and administrators not just within each school but more importantly among schools.

This overview discusses the similarities and differences in these three exemplars of networks:

1. The school cluster system in Thailand
2. The school cluster projects in Sri Lanka
3. The Learning Action Cells in the Philippines

Comparisons are made in regard to these six aspects: (a) background and rationale of the network structures; (b) objectives; (c) organizational structure; (d) linkages; (e) monitoring and evaluation; and (f) the innovations effected by the networks.

Background and Rationale

A common background of the structures in the three countries is the large pupil population and the high proportion of the population situated in widely dispersed rural areas. Thailand has a vast area comprising 73 provinces. Over three-fifths of its 30,641 primary schools are small schools which have enrolments ranging from less than 50 to at most 200 pupils. The problem of how to deliver effective primary education to the great mass of school age children and ascertain that teachers are competent for the job requires a monumental task.

Sri Lanka has over 9,500 state schools reflecting religious, racial and linguistic differences and varying school resources. Bridging the gap between small and large schools, poor and rich, situated over different geographic locations poses serious concerns that have to be dealt with. There are glaring disparities in the quality of teaching and learning in spite of the fact that a centrally designed common curriculum is followed in all the state schools.

In the Philippines, two of the main concerns of the Ministry of Education are improvement of the standards of primary education and reducing the pupil drop-out rate. As in Thailand, the majority of the population live in rural areas. Teachers generally, have been found to be not as competent as they should be; hence, there is a need for a continuous in-service teacher education programme at the school level and managed by the teachers themselves.

In all three countries it is recognized that the reforms needed cannot be effectively handled in the traditionally centralized system because of the problem of number and costs. Most of the functions have to be decentralized and delegated to the schools themselves.

Objectives

The concept of school clusters had been informally implemented in Thailand for two decades prior to its formal integration into the primary education delivery system in 1980. Each school cluster consists of 5-10 schools in the same vicinity with the purpose of assisting one another by sharing the educational resources available. The clusters have also been helpful in facilitating the implementation of the new curriculum.

Sri Lanka's school cluster projects are concerned with grouping schools within a geographical area with enrolments of 3,000 – 5,000 pupils. This involves grouping 10 to 15 small and large schools from the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. The objectives of the grouping in the Sri Lanka school cluster model are to reduce inequities in education facilities, to enable schools to be managed by competent personnel and to facilitate the collective utilization of resources.

In both the Thailand and Sri Lanka models, the objective is to enable the small schools to benefit from the facilities and resources – human and material – of the large schools. Some differences are immediately apparent, however. Whereas the clusters in Thailand all consist of only primary schools, those in Sri Lanka consist of different levels, i.e. primary and secondary schools together. The Sri Lanka clusters are also much larger in terms of both number of schools grouped together and in the number of pupils they comprise. Since the number of pupils in most primary schools in Thailand is small, the total enrolment in a cluster of schools would be less than 3000, hence not as big as the Sri Lanka model.

The School Learning Action Cells in the Philippine network allow for a clustering of schools, but this is conditioned by the number of teachers targetted for training in the schools. A semblance of school clustering is adopted in the case of small primary schools only to be able to come out with a Learning Action Cell (LAC) consisting of 3 to 12 teachers. Otherwise, the LAC could be formed by teachers from only one or two schools.

The striking difference in the clustering appears to be the main criterion for grouping. In the Thai model, the focus is on schools; in the Sri Lanka model the grouping is based primarily on students; while in the Philippine model, it is on the number of teachers involved.

The objectives of the School LAC in the Philippines differ slightly from those of the school cluster schemes in either Sri Lanka or Thailand. Because the LAC is primarily a training delivery system, its main objectives are to effect early application of learning from these training sessions, continuing reorientation and development sessions and mutual monitoring of and support for various action projects. The fourth objective of the LAC, i.e. "strengthening of local (regional and sub-regional) capabilities for 'ground level' project identification, planning implementation and evaluation" could be an implicit objective of the school clusters as well.

Organizational structure

School principals are consistently chosen to head the school clusters or the LAC. In the school cluster system in Thailand, a principal of one of the cluster schools is elected as chairman of the School Cluster Committee which consists of principals or directors of all the schools in the cluster as *ex officio* members, and of teachers elected to the committee.

In Sri Lanka the school cluster is headed by the Cluster Principal who is the principal of a secondary school in the cluster. A School Cluster Board with advisory function helps in the administration of the cluster. The members of the Board are not elected; they consist of principals of the schools in the cluster as well as representatives of the School Development Society. To enable the cluster principal to devote more of his time to the school cluster, an additional principal is appointed for the core school.

In the school LAC in the Philippines, the principal of the school where the LAC is organized is automatically the leader of the LAC. He is formally trained for this role. School principals have their own LAC at the district level which is headed by a district supervisor. Higher level LACs have for their leader, a person holding a higher position than the LAC members.

The modes of operation of the three networking structures are similar in that regular meetings or sessions are called to formulate plans of activities and see that these are implemented properly. In the Philippine model, members of the LAC as well as LAC leaders have gone through five to seven days of formal training from which they come out with concrete action plans for their schools. The LAC uses these action plans and integrates them in the Instructional Programme to be implemented in the school(s) during the non-formal training covered by the LAC.

Activities in the school cluster meetings in both the Thailand and Sri Lanka models focus on mutual respect and co-operation and sharing of resources among the member schools. In the Philippine model, the sharing would be more on knowledge, ideas, or expertise since there are not many extra resources to share. Because a large primary school can have its own LAC, its teacher members would be from the some school; hence, they have access to the same school equipment and instructional materials. Moreover, since basic instructional materials are centrally produced and distributed, disparities in resources are not as pronounced between rural schools as between rural and urban schools. A combining of rural and urban schools is not

likely in the LAC because the schools that may consititute a school cluster for LAC purposes are generally small rural schools.

The school LAC network follows an instructional programme with a specified curriculum. The 2-year LAC instructional programme is designed to complement the formal training undergone by the members and the LAC leader. It comprises beliefs and values and how these are taught, as well as technical skills for teaching.

The school clusters do not appear to have a pre-set instructional design but allow for dealing with problems as these arise. There is a close interface between actual teaching and the teachers learning from their own clusters.

In the Sri Lanka pilot cluster-school projects, the focus seems to be training for effective management of the schools and of sharing resources. The principals underwent seminars and workshops to upgrade their leadership and management capabilities as well as to develop positive attitudes toward the cluster concept. In the Thailand model, attitude change seminars were not necessary because, as pointed out earlier, the concept of cluster schools was already operational for two decades before its formal integration into the educational system. Rather, the more important concern than attitude change, is the effective operationalization of the educational resource centre concept, where the core school takes on the functions of the resource centre of the school cluster.

It is interesting to point out that whereas in some countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines) the educational resource centre is a mechanism for serving several schools in the community – hence in effect precedes their informal clustering in terms of common interest – the educational resource centre in the Thailand model supplements and strengthens the already operational cluster system.

In the Sri Lanka concept, the core school takes on the role of an educational resource centre because, as the core school, it has the best equipment, laboratory, workshop, library and audio-visual facilities which can be shared by the other schools.

In the Philippines, decentralized learning resource centres are not yet fully integrated in the LAC network. For one thing, most of these centres preceded the LAC concept. Both LACs and learning resource centres function under the Ministry of Education and Sports but the lines of relationship in the total structure are not clearly defined.

Linkages

Horizontal linkages are immediately apparent in each of the three network structures described. Some of the linkages are explicitly built into the structure; others emerge in the course of operating the system.

The linking of rich and poor schools, big and small ones, primary and secondary school levels is deliberate in the Sri Lanka model. This is done to reduce the competition among schools for patronage. The linkage between schools is

effected by the organizational structure – the school cluster Board consisting of principals of the schools comprising the cluster. Monthly meetings are hosted on a rotation basis by the schools so that all the principals have an opportunity to see actual conditions in each school in the cluster. Linkage with other education-oriented groups is also facilitated through representatives who are members of the School Cluster Board.

Linkages between schools and communities are facilitated through activities (e.g. competitions, sports fests) arranged by the cluster. Vertical linkage with units of the Ministry of Education is facilitated by the communication and reports submitted by the Cluster Principal to the District and Regional Director of Education.

In the cluster school system in Thailand, the linkage between the school cluster and universities as well as teachers colleges in the region is well defined. When expertise is needed from the teachers colleges or other academic institutions, requests are made by the core school on behalf of the member schools. The link between the villages and the schools is direct. Each school can deal directly with the village without passing its request through the core school. Non-formal education matters are dealt with either through the core school or through the member schools.

The linkages between schools are strengthened by the educational resource centre, which is based in the core school. Various types of lending and sharing mechanisms are followed to maximize the sharing of human and material resources at the centre.

Vertical linkage with the District and Provincial Primary Education Offices is also well defined. Staff from the offices give technical and professional assistance to the cluster through the core school.

In the LAC network, the linkage between consecutive levels in the hierarchy of LACs is provided by the LAC leaders. The school principal who is the leader of a school-level LAC is a member of a LAC at the district level; the leader of the district LAC in turn is a member of a LAC at the next higher level. Hence, every school administrator gets an opportunity to serve in both capacities as member and leader in the network. Besides the linkage function, training in leadership and management is gained in a very concrete way by LAC members and leaders.

Linkage with different offices of the Education Ministry is facilitated through personnel who have specific functions in the LAC operation at the different levels.

The link between the school and community as well as other agencies, government or private, is fostered by the teachers and the school principals who work closely with parents and community leaders.

Linkage with universities and teacher training college need not be explicitly stated because schools can freely invite experts on their own initiative as has been the practice for many years.

In all the three network exemplars, community participation and involvement in school activities and concerns is given a high premium. Teachers learn as they teach. In effect, the community is their social laboratory.

Monitoring and evaluation

All three exemplars of network structures conduct monitoring and evaluation activities. Monitoring is observed and stressed in the Sri Lanka and Philippine networks, these being still in early stages of development. In all three systems, monitoring is carried out by the respective ministries of education in the three countries.

Evaluation of the systems is done internally for formative evaluation purposes. A number of evaluation studies have been done on the cluster school system in Thailand. At least two case studies have been conducted on selected cluster school projects in Sri Lanka. In the case of the LAC, specific personnel in the ministry are charged with the responsibility of evaluating the programme at different levels. Regional research teams have also been commissioned by the Development Academy of the Philippines to assess this innovative teacher training delivery system.

Innovations effected

The three networks are themselves innovations: they are new mechanisms aimed at improving the existing educational system. The networks have been able to mobilize resources. It is often said that material and human abilities abound everywhere, lying idle or minimally used; they only need to be mobilized and actively used to become real resources. This is very true in the case of the three networks.

The cluster school concept existed in an informal way in Thailand more than two decades ago. In 1980 the concept was given full recognition by making it an integral part of the decentralized administrative structure of primary education, thereby making school clusters more dynamic. Teachers and schools were mobilized toward achieving their goals co-operatively. By linking with one another and with other agencies and the communities where they are situated, the schools accomplish more than they would in working individually. The school cluster approach is now seen as an important way to enhance the educational quality of rural schools and reduce inequality in educational opportunity. It is seen as a creative political and cultural solution consistent with the philosophy that every village should have its own school and that schools – like villages – should work co-operatively for the benefit of their constituents.

Teacher utilization is maximized; the training and expertise of specialized teachers in Sri Lanka are shared with schools in the cluster. Similarly, poor schools are assured of having access to skilled teachers who can be shared with other schools. The Sri Lanka school cluster pilot projects have also fostered co-operation among schools in place of the harmful competition in the traditional system. Common examination questions have been initiated to ensure the same standards of quality across schools. Co-curricular activities are organized on a cluster basis. Requests for equipment, buildings and facilities are based on actual needs of the entire cluster

instead of needs of individual schools. Teacher in-service training is organized on a cluster basis; teachers participate in identifying training needs. The experience of sharing fosters mutual respect among principals as well as teachers.

In the Philippine model, the major innovation is giving the responsibility for staff training at the local level to the teachers themselves; that is, the teachers' continuing professional development should be taken care of by them through their participation in the school LAC. Whereas before, in-service training was planned, carried out and managed by higher authorities, this function is now decentralized even to the lowest unit in the hierarchy, the level of the school.

A noteworthy innovation in all the three models is the development of instructional materials by the teachers themselves to suit local needs and problems. Such materials truly make school learning relevant to the pupils.

In all three network structures, the most noteworthy innovation is the increased degree of teacher involvement and active participation. The structures confirm what has often been said – that the teacher is still the greatest resource in every education delivery system. This resource has to be mobilized, his expertise used and his skills and interest sustained.

In sum, the three papers clearly illustrate how institutional networks can enhance the effectiveness of the educational system. In the three country situations, it is not likely that the multiple problems of large school-age populations, scattered schools, great disparities in the socio-economic conditions of schools and communities, and the need for continuing in-service teacher training will disappear in a few years. The highly centralized policy of delivering basic education may have to seriously turn to decentralized network structures to ease the burden of management to ensure quality education.

The evaluation results in all three models are favourable, thereby making the structures worth trying in other countries facing similar problems to those of the three countries covered in this monograph.

Chapter Two

THE SCHOOL CLUSTER SYSTEM

by

Rung Kaewdaeng*
Office of the National Primary Education Commission
Thailand

Background

One of the basic problems faced in the management and organization of basic education in Thailand is how to deliver effective primary education to a great mass of school age children living in the vast area covering the country's 73 provinces. Nearly 80 per cent of Thailand's population are engaged in agriculture and agriculture-oriented occupations, which fact accounts for the scattered nature and existence of thousands of small communities. The economic, social and geographical circumstances necessitate that basic education be provided through small primary schools located in the dispersed small communities.

It is estimated that out of the existing 30,641 primary schools in Thailand, more than half (59.39 per cent) are "small" primary schools, i.e., schools with an enrolment of at most 200 pupils.

Most of the rural primary schools, which make up over 90 per cent of the total number of primary schools in Thailand, are located in remote areas. It is estimated that the ratio between the number of primary schools and the number of villages is 1:1.7. The highly dispersed location of thousands of primary schools all over the country has greatly constrained the Government's efforts to improve the management and the quality of primary education.

Small primary schools situated in villages difficult to reach have to make do with their own human and educational resources which are often inadequate in terms of both quantity and quality. It has been found that most primary schools still lack basic teaching/learning materials and equipment and that the quality of teaching/learning and supervision in the majority of primary schools is low. However, the Government fully realizes that to improve the management of primary education by pursuing a centralized policy of management would be extremely costly and would involve an enormous budget. Quality improvement efforts have

---

* Dr. Rung Kaewdaeng is at present the Deputy Secretary-General of the National Primary Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand. He obtained his Bachelor in Education degree from Pathumwan Education College and a Master's degree from the School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration. He obtained his Ph.D. in Education Administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1977. He is a very widely travelled educator and has been extensively involved in international and national seminars on the planning and management of education.

therefore been decentralized to the local level. The idea of encouraging the primary schools themselves to pool their resources to help one another out seems to be the most cost-effective method. From this emerged the school cluster system in 1980.

A school cluster is a grouping together of a number of schools with the purpose of enabling them to assist one another by sharing the educational resources available in the clusters. The school cluster concept was in existence for two decades prior to 1980. In the 1960s, the Department of General Education, which was then responsible for the management of the majority of primary schools, encouraged all primary schools in the country to set up school clusters. Each school cluster consisted of 5-10 schools in the same vicinity. A committee comprising principals and directors of every school in the cluster was set up in each cluster to oversee the schools' activities as well as to enable member schools to assist one another in solving problems relating to school improvement. It was estimated that in 1960 there were 3,512 school clusters, with the number of member schools amounting to 23,001 out of a total number of 23,155. Moreover, in 1978, when the new primary curriculum was introduced, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development had informally grouped schools to help facilitate the implementation of the new curriculum. Schools with qualified teachers and good facilities were selected as lead schools to provide academic and supervisory support to eight or nine other schools in the vicinity, i.e., of the same cluster.

It should be pointed out, however, that although the concept of school clusters has been widely implemented in the past two decades, the grouping together of schools was only carried out on an informal basis. It was not until 1980 that legislation on school clusters was officially procured by the authorities concerned (i.e., the National Primary Education Commission) to govern the scope of work, functions and other related procedures of the school clusters. Since 1980, the school cluster system has formed an integral part of the decentralized administrative structure of primary education with the school clusters being the core units at the local level for the improvement of schools' activities in all aspects, while the Provincial and District Primary Education Offices provide supplementary support in upgrading the quality of primary education in schools, through supervision, training, research as well as the development and provision of teaching-learning materials and equipment. As of 1984, the total number of school clusters is 4,079. The number of schools included in the clusters is 30,693 which is the total number of primary schools run by the ONPEC.

Organizational structure

To ensure efficiency, smooth functioning and uniformty in the administration of school clusters, the National Primary Education Commission's Regulations on School Clusters (B.E. 2523) lays down specific rules and regulations on the number of schools, the structure and functions of school clusters, the criteria for dividing school clusters, and other related procedures. The regulations apply to all primary schools under the jurisdiction of the Office of the National Primary Education Commission (ONPEC).

Organization of school clusters. A school cluster consists of not less than seven schools and not more than 10. If it is necessary to deviate from this, permission to form the cluster is sought from the Provincial Primary Education Committee.

The grouping of school clusters is based either on geographical location, administrative structures or conditions of communication in the area. The school cluster may be named after the localities or be given other names as appropriate.

The school cluster committee designates an appropriate school to serve as secretariat and when a school is founded, it is included in the school cluster in accordance with the above mentioned guidelines.

Co-operation and mutual respect, both physical and intellectual, are the guiding tenets for the operation of all work in the school cluster in order to bring about improvements in the following areas: (1) academic affairs; (2) school building; (3) personnel; (4) pupils' activities; (5) secretarial and financial matters; and (6) the relationship between schools and communities.

Administration of school clusters. Principals and directors of all the schools in the cluster are *ex officio* members of the School Cluster Committee. A number of teachers engaged in active teaching are also elected to the committee. The number of teachers elected is equal to half (or one more than half) of the number of *ex-officio* members. The number of elected teachers is not to exceed one per school.

The District or Branch District Primary Education Committee lays down the election procedures and conducts the election. It determines the date and venue of the election, appoints the election committee, announces the list of candidates and the results of the election.

Teachers in the school cluster elect the Chairman of the School Cluster Committee from among those holding the rank of principal or director. The teachers also elect the members of the committee from among teachers engaged in active teaching. Candidacy for the election should be seconded by not less than ten teachers in the school cluster.

The election is done by secret balloting. In case of a tie in number of votes, a re-election is conducted but only for those who received equal votes.

The School Cluster Committee selects a Vice Chairman and a secretary from among the Committee members.

The term of office of the Committee Chairman and members who are elected from among teachers is two academic years. They may be re-elected for another term, but they cannot hold office for more than two consecutive terms. Committee members are considered no longer in office when they (1) die; (2) resign; (3) complete their term of office; (4) cease to be civil-servant teachers; (5) obtain appointments outside the school cluster; (6) are no longer principals, directors or teachers (for those who are elected from among teachers; or (7) are unable to perform their duties for more than six months, for such reasons as taking a leave of absence for further studies, temporary suspension of duties, or entering the military service.

Functions of the school cluster committee. The Committee is entrusted with the following functions:

1. Formulate school improvement plans within the scope of work of the school cluster and conduct school activities in line with educational management at the district and provincial levels as well as the policies of the National Primary Education Commission.
2. Consider and approve plans or projects to improve every school in the school cluster.
3. Consider and approve plans for staff development in the school cluster.
4. Act as the co-ordinating point for co-operation among schools in the cluster and between schools and communities for conducting various activities.
5. Make recommendations concerning annual budget proposals of schools in the cluster.
6. Follow up the performance and conduct of teachers in the cluster.
7. Make recommendations on the annual promotion of teachers in the cluster.
8. Set work plans, conduct surveys and carry out activities in accordance with the Primary Education Act to bring about universalization of primary education.
9. Evaluate the performance of schools in the cluster.
10. Carry out other activities as specified by the District and Provincial Primary Education Committees.

Operation of the school cluster. The School Cluster Committee Chairman calls meetings of the Committee at least once a month and reports to the District Primary Education Office. He collects and submits statistical information to that office. He acts as co-ordinator in the cluster as well as between the cluster and other agencies. He also acts as chairman for the consideration of the annual promotion of teachers in the cluster and carries out other educational activities as specified by the District or Branch Primary Education Committees.

At least half of the total number of members must attend the School Cluster Committee meeting to constitute a quorum. Voting is carried out by a simple majority rule. The chairman casts a vote only to break tied votes.

The fund for the administration of the school cluster is drawn from the budget allocated by the Office of National Primary Education or from donations by other governmental agencies, foundations and private individuals.

The Chairman of the School Cluster Committee manages the budget or other income by following the objectives of the school cluster and those of the Government

or donors of funds, with the approval of the Committee. The safeguarding and disbursement of the school cluster's funds follow Government auditing rules and regulations.

A common feature of the organizational structure of each school cluster is that it has a core school. An attempt is being made now to develop this core school also as a resource centre. The first set of 162 resource centres were started in 1983. These are located in the two pilot provinces. Each resource centre at the cluster level is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

a) To produce instructional media;

b) To advise and enhance the instructional media usage;

c) To make the records of instructional media and arrange their system;

d) To provide services on instructional media;

e) To repair and maintain instructional media;

f) To follow up the result of instructional media usage;

g) As an instrument to carry out the six tasks of school clusters, viz, improvement in academic affairs, school buildings, staff personnel, pupils' activities, secretarial and financial matters, and relationship between school and community.

To achieve these objectives, each resource centre lays a great deal of emphasis on the in-service and cluster training of teachers from the member schools. This means that the teachers of the member schools come regularly to attend workshops, seminars and other programmes organized by the resource centre.

Other professional support to the school cluster system

Since 1980, the school clusters have been the core units at the grass roots level for the management and improvement of school activities in all aspects. In decentralizing the management of primary education to the local level, the authorities concerned have also taken measures to ensure professional support to the school clusters at the provincial and district levels.

At the provincial level, the Provincial Primary Education Office (PPEO) in each province assumes the responsibility for school supervision and in-service training for district supervisors, teachers and school cluster personnel mainly in areas which will help promote the quality of teaching-learning in primary schools; for example, the production and use of simple instructional materials and equipment in collaboration with the Central Supervisory Unit and teacher training colleges.

Research and experimentation relating to educational development in the province as well as production of simple teaching-learning materials are also responsibilities of the PPEO.

In some such PPEOs, technical centres equipped with appropriate audio-visual materials and equipment have already been established to strengthen the provision of professional support service to the school clusters. Some Provincial Educational Resource Centres have a mobile unit which facilitates the movement of materials and equipment to areas where these are needed.

At the district level, the District Primary Education Division Office (DPEO) assumes the responsibility for monitoring and co-ordinating activities of the schools in the district and supervising the schools. It should be noted, however, that at present the District Primary Education Offices take only a secondary role to the Provincial Primary Education Offices in school supervision. The persons who are responsible for supervision at the provincial district and sub-district levels supervise, follow up and prepare reports for the Provincial Educational Resource Centre.

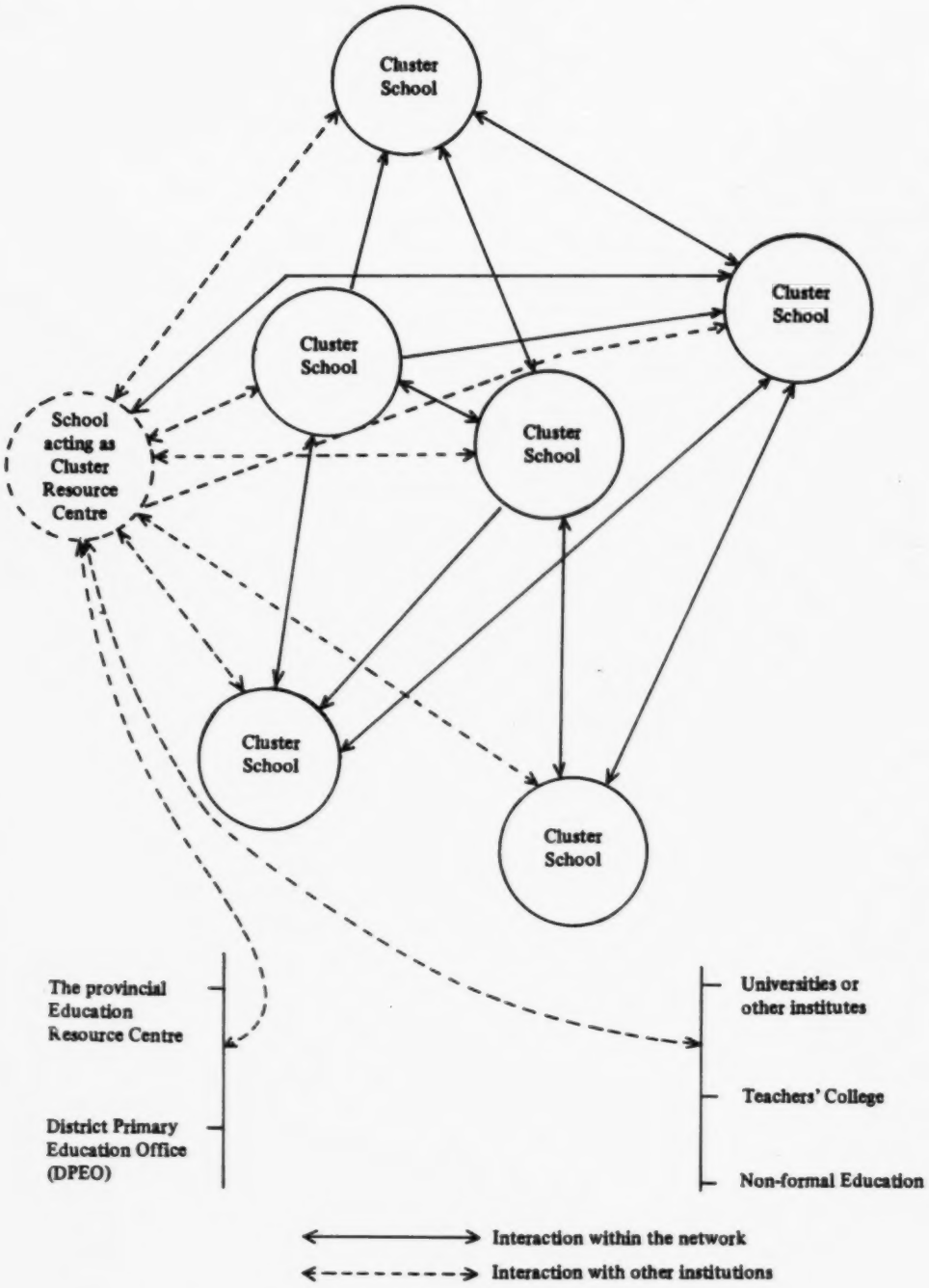
Linkages. Horizontal linkages among the schools is naturally built in to the concept of school clusters because the aim is to enable schools to assist one another by sharing educational resources. Interactions within cluster and across clusters is facilitated through common links to the District Primary Education Offices and to the Provincial Primary Education Offices. The link to the villages is also immediately apparent. Communication between schools is as dynamic as communication between villages as well as between schools and villages. The involvement of other agencies – government or private – as funding donors also maximizes the potency of the school cluster system. Schools within the cluster interact with one another, that is, they exchange instructional materials and audio-visual aids. An expert teacher from one school may also go to another to give demonstration lessons. It will thus be seen that the linkages that exist among all the schools within the cluster are horizontal. Horizontal linkage also exists between the resource centre, which too is a part of a primary school, and the member schools of the cluster. This is explained by the fact that the resource centre, being the base for materials production and teacher development, can achieve these objectives if it gets feedback from schools and modifies its programmes accordingly.

The other linkages of school clusters are with the leader schools. Leader schools have a very significant role in the school cluster programme. If a school is selected to be a "leader school", it receives some support from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Development. These leader schools serve as exemplars in various aspects of education development. Teachers from other nearby schools use these leader schools as a place to visit and learn from examples. It is expected that by setting up these leader schools, the question about what a good school should be like can be answered clearly. Thus, leader schools promote grass roots-level inter-institutional networking structures.

The linkage between the school cluster and the provincial and district level offices is shown on Figure 1.

Another networking structure which could be used by leader schools and resource centres is that of teachers' colleges. Thirty-six such colleges form a consortium. The main responsibilities of the consortium are:

Figure 1. Organization structure of a cluster having a resource centre



a) Determining the manpower needs in the region through survey, study or research conducted by colleges/researchers appointed by the consortium;

b) Planning of educational programmes to meet such needs as well as planning of other colleges' projects and activities related to in-service training, research, promotion of folk culture and academic services to the local community;

c) Discouraging duplication of programmes, projects, and activities of the colleges within the consortium;

d) Pooling and utilizing the resources, financial and human, to help each other;

e) Assessing the management process and the activities of the consortium and the individual member colleges.

The resource centres can also fall back upon the academic resources of universities and can develop linkages with them.

Figures 2 to 6 show the links that can be effected in implementing the equipment of resource sharing function of the school cluster as facilitated by the School Cluster Resource Centre.

Figure 2 shows a type of sharing where the Centre has only one set of a particular instructional equipment. This is lent to the first school, then the schools take turns borrowing the equipment. The last school in the cluster returns the set to the centre after all have used it. Another type of material could similarly be shared with the schools – from the last school to the first, then returned to the centre.

Figure 3 depicts how two sets of the same instructional materials/equipment could be shared by the schools in the cluster. This can also be the type followed when two different sets of materials are simultaneously doing the rounds of schools.

Figure 4 shows the sharing scheme when three sets of the same instructional material or three different sets of materials are simultaneously fielded to the schools in the cluster. Each set is returned to the centre after going through a sub-cluster within the school cluster.

Where schools simultaneously borrow different types of materials, reflecting their varying needs, each could borrow directly from the Centre and return the material after using it (Figure 5).

The fifth type of sharing (Figure 6) applies to instructional media which are difficult to move or are not able to be transported from one place to another. Such media are permanently located in the Centre where teachers bring their classes to use the service. This is also usually the case when the centre organizes exhibits from the cluster schools.

Figure 2. Mode of sharing among cluster schools when the centre has only one set of a particular instruction material or aid.

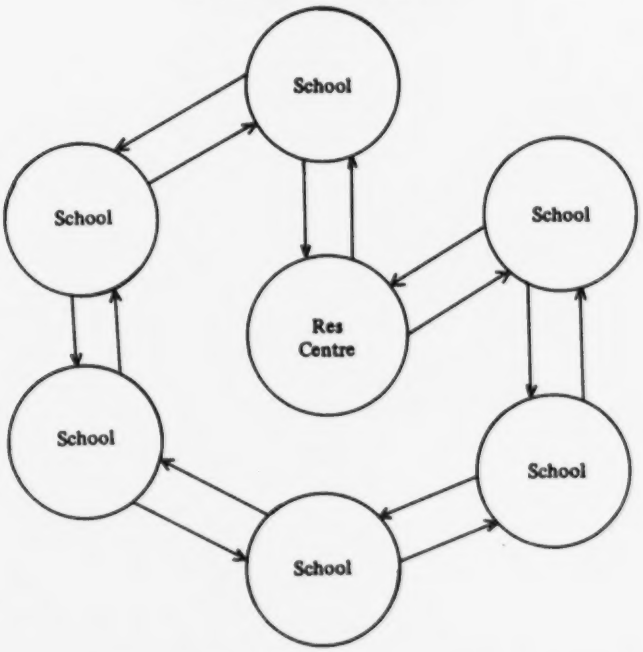


Figure 3. Mode of sharing when two sets of materials can be lent to the schools.

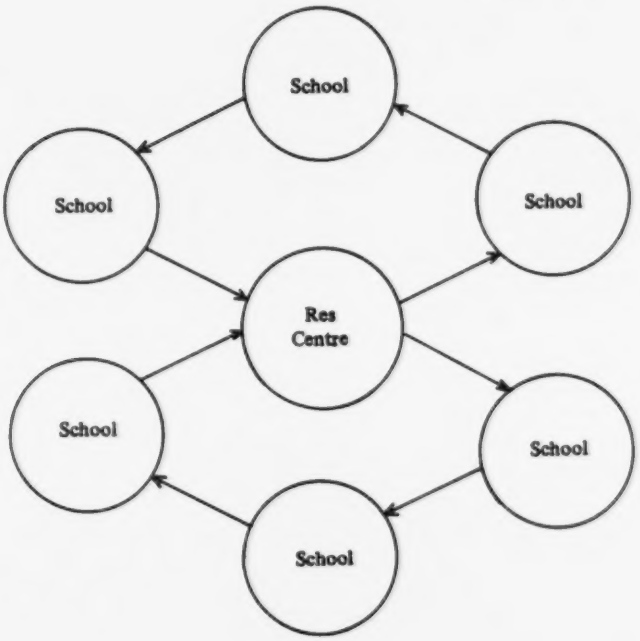


Figure 4. Mode of sharing when the Resource Centre can lend out three independent sets of materials.

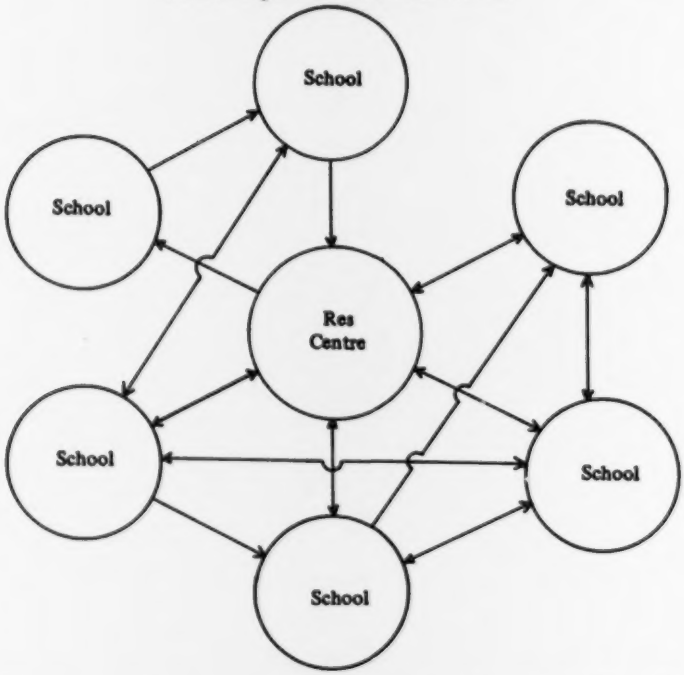


Figure 5. Simultaneous sharing or use of instructional equipment by schools in the cluster.

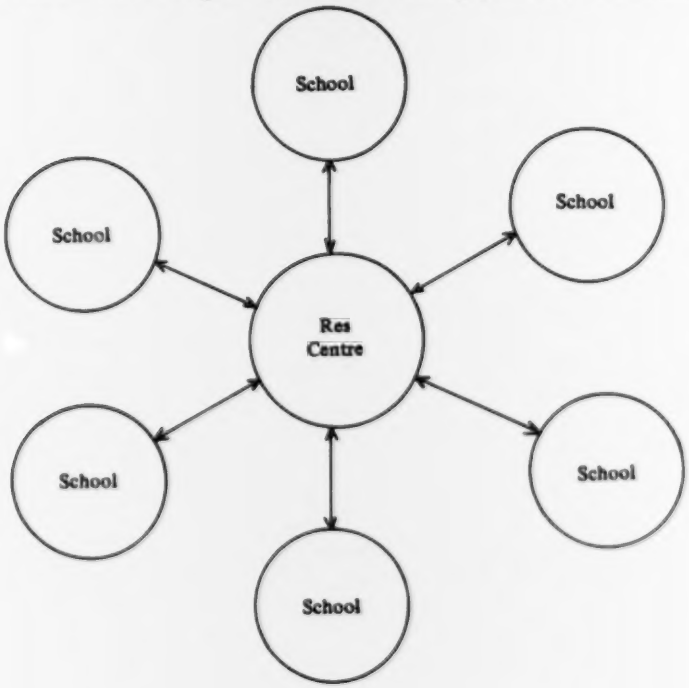
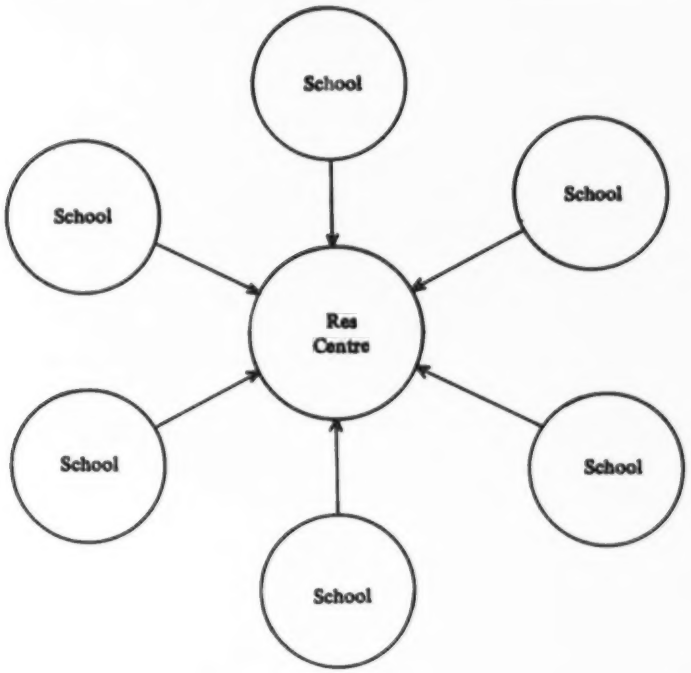


Figure 6. Sharing of immovable equipment at the Resource Centre.



The school cluster as a resource

The school clusters aim at adopting and generating innovations in all curricular and co-curricular areas. Moveover, the school cluster, along with resource centres, is an innovation that has immense potential for mobilizing the existing physical and human resources of schools to further their programmes of school improvement. It develops co-operation and interdependence among schools. As soon as this innovation catches up, schools will adopt and generate new ideas and innovations pertaining to all teaching-learning aspects and co-curricular activities for achieving the all round development of students.

Viewed in this context, the networking structure is a valuable existing resource and has immense potentialities for further development and utilization. The structure is building up its resources of skilled, competent and committed personnel who bear promise for improving tremendously the standards of education and for promoting the use of educational technology and educational materials required for updating the teaching-learning process and the in-service education programmes of teachers. The ONPEC is trying its level best to achieve these objectives.

Motivation incentives and cognition. The cluster system within the network uses many built-in devices for motivating teachers. For example, schools within each cluster are ranked in the order of their academic performance which is judged on the basis of students' achievement tested through an examination held at cluster

level at the end of the academic year. The teachers working in schools ranked first, second or third get appreciation and recognition. They may also be considered for accelerated promotions.

Monitoring evaluation and feedback. This is done in each cluster by the Cluster Management Committee which consists of all the principals of the member schools and some teachers who are professionally very competent. These teachers are drawn from different schools and keep on changing every two years.

The Management Committee visits every school in the concerned cluster at least once in each term and evaluates the functioning of the school and the follow-up made by the earlier recommendations and suggestions. The Management Committee also checks whether or not the school is working according to its plan and calendar of activities. It is noted that there exists a tremendous potential in the innovation taking place in these networking structures.

Strengthening the existing structure

Specific mechanisms at both provincial and district levels are planned to strengthen the professional support to school clusters. At the provincial level, a Provincial Primary Education Resource Centre (PPERC) will be set up in each PPEO. The main functions of the PPERC are to: (1) promote and develop teaching-learning materials and equipment for use in school clusters; (2) demonstrate and give advice to school clusters on the use of materials and equipment and on related activities such as training and dissemination of information on innovations; and (3) repair equipment and teaching aids and keep them in working condition.

Workshops are planned to train personnel to carry out these functions. A printing unit is also envisioned for each PPERC which will facilitate the printing and reproduction of teaching materials adapted to local needs.

At the district level, the District Primary Education Offices (DPEOs), which since the establishment of ONPEC in 1980 have been engaged mainly in co-ordinating and monitoring schools activities, will assume greater responsibility in school supervision and administration. It is planned that eventually the DPEDs will be the main local bodies responsible for school supervision while the PPEOs will gradually relinquish their supervisory function and concentrate on providing technical support to school clusters through the resource centres. Because of the large number of primary schools, supervision can be more effectively done by the DPEOs than the PPEOs because the former are more geographically accessible to primary schools. It is envisioned that in the next few years, all DPEOs will be staffed with at least two supervisors per district. Bigger districts will each be staffed with three or four supervisors. Each DPEO can then be responsible for the supervision of 42 schools, or four school clusters on the average.

It is envisioned that the school cluster system will help establish a permanent and effective mechanism for delivering a continuing in-service education for teachers, supervisors administrators and technical staff of ONPEC.

Chapter Three

THE SCHOOL LEARNING ACTION CELL : AN EXPERIENCE IN NETWORKING

by

Dionisio V. Abitong*
Principal III
Davao City, Philippines

Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS) has been concerned for the last several years with the problem of improving the standards of primary education and of reducing the pupil dropout rate. Recognized as a key factor to these problems was the level of competency of the teachers. A need was felt for a continuous in-service education for teachers which would enable them to teach better, to make schooling sufficiently likeable to keep the pupils from dropping out of school.

Toward this end the Educational Reorientation Programme was launched. This is a comprehensive staff development programme designed by the Development Academy of the Philippines to reshape public elementary education through a sustained reorientation of the MECS teaching and administrative staff.

The Educational Reorientation Programme (ERP) focuses on the "grass roots educators". Its long-term objective is to develop, establish and institutionalize a system for staff development so that even the lowest unit in the Ministry will be able to plan and manage its own continuing training and development activities.

Among the major undertakings of ERP is the Teacher Formation Programme (TFP) which has been implemented since October 1983 in order to respond to the need to upgrade the elementary grades teachers' capabilities. The TFP is a long-term staff development effort consisting of two phases: (1) the formal training phase, an 8-day training activity managed by regional trainers; and (2) the non-formal training phase which runs for a period of at least two years and is managed by the training participants (the elementary school teachers) themselves to become competent professionals and well-grounded persons.

Learning Action Cells are established at four different levels – regional, division, district and school levels. Each is designed for the delivery of training for particular levels of teaching and administrative staff in the MECS hierarchy.

---

* Mr. Dionisio V. Abitong had been a primary school teacher for ten years before he became a Principal in 1976. He holds a Master in Public Administration degree and is currently assisting the Development Academy of the Philippines as a regional training officer for the Education Reorientation Programme. Mr. Abitong is very actively involved in many civic and social action programmes in Region IX in the Philippines.

This study paper focuses on the School Learning Action Cell, the grass roots-level structure which is designed to upgrade the capabilities of elementary school teachers.

Description

The School Learning Action Cell (SLAC) is the lowest level in a hierarchy of four levels of LACs. Each School Learning Action Cell is composed of a team of six to eight targetted teachers coming from one school or from a cluster of schools, and their respective principals. A principal is chosen as the team leader.

The school LAC is the mechanism that ensures the continuing development of the teachers after the formal training phase. The non-formal training phase which immediately follows the formal training runs for a minimum period of two years. The period is divided into four blocks called terms. During each term, the members of the school LAC, under the leadership of the principal, undertake the different lessons divided into modules and learning episodes. Each term has an average of five modules or a total of 20 episodes for the whole non-formal training phase.

The contents of the curriculum covers two aspects: (1) the General Curriculum which focuses on the continuing development of interpersonal skills and beliefs and values system; and (2) the Technical Curriculum which focuses on skills acquisition to enhance the teacher's teaching competencies.

Objectives. The school LAC works towards the following objectives:

1. Early application of learnings from all training and development sessions;
2. Mutual monitoring of and support for the various individual/collective action projects;
3. Continuing reorientation and development sessions to internalize individual and collective commitments to MECS objectives as well as to encourage sustained development of technical skills; and
4. Strengthening of local (regional and sub-regional) capabilities for "ground level" project identification, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Specifically, the School LAC focuses on the further development of the teacher's instructional management skills and provides for immediate on-the-job application of these skills. It is expected to come out with a two-sided outcome: that of the teacher's personal and professional growth, and more importantly, the instructional improvement targets for his/her pupils. Overall, the goal of the LAC is improved teacher competence.

Organization and structure.

A school LAC is organized after the principal and targetted teachers in a certain grade level (e.g. grade I, grade II, etc.) in a certain school or cluster of schools

are trained in the formal phase of the Teacher Formation Programme for teachers and the Educational Planning and Management Programme for principals and head teachers.

The Teacher Formation Programme lasts for eight days. It aims to help the school teacher become an effective change agent in developing a sense of nationhood among his students and in raising their achievement levels. The competence-building process concentrates on what must be taught especially in the field of value/belief formation; how to teach more effectively in both the traditional skill areas (the three Rs) and in the more unfamiliar area of beliefs and values; why elementary education must be reoriented and improved; and the teacher's sense of personal and professional efficacy, i.e. a confidence in her own competence as a professional educator, and a commitment to continuous learning and growth.

The experiential learning method is used to facilitate learning by building on the participants' concrete, individual and collective experiences.

The non-formal training phase is carried out through membership in the school LAC where the teachers undertake and manage their own continuing retraining.

The formal training phase for principals is carried out through the Educational Planning and Management Programme. This programme runs for six days and focuses on the needs of school principals and head teachers for improved technical and managerial skills in teacher supervision and school administration, as well as systematic and sustained support for the continuing development of their teachers. This programme also uses the experiential learning approach.

At the end of the formal training, the school principals are expected to have developed a commitment to pursue their own personal and professional growth as well as the continuing development of their teachers through the non-formal training phase. They are also expected to formulate action plans for mobilizing their teachers through the school LAC which they have to organize.

The formal training phases for both the teachers and the principals, therefore, prepares them to set up the school LACs.

A trainer-in-charge is assigned to each school LAC to monitor the growth and development of the team, particularly in the interpersonal skills and beliefs/values aspects. Monitoring of technical skills acquisition is done by the school LAC leader, with the assistance of staff supervisors of the Ministry on the regional and division levels.

Three activities have to be undertaken prior to the implementation of the LAC Instructional Programme. These are:

1. Planning for LAC organization
2. Organizing for LAC operation
3. Planning for LAC operation

To ensure efficiency in every stage of LAC operation, certain guidelines are set up for the actors involved.

Planning for LAC organization. This activity involves the determination of the LAC composition, membership and type, and the choice of the school LAC leader in the case of a cluster school LAC.

Membership. The school LAC must have a maximum of 12 and a minimum of three members who have completed the formal training phase of the Teacher Formation Programme. The LAC leader must likewise be a graduate of the formal training programme for principals and headteachers.

Grouping for school LACs. There are three alternative types of school LAC that can be formed, namely:

1. Single-school LAC – This can be formed by teachers coming from the same school. In schools where there are more than 12 prospective members, a single-school LAC can still be formed but the members must be divided into two groups during LAC sessions.

2. Cluster school LAC – This type of LAC can be formed by teachers coming from a cluster of neighbouring schools with less than three teachers.

3. Isolate LAC – This is a single-school LAC that can be formed even with less than three teachers from the same school. However, this type is encouraged only when the school is located in an isolated area and where it is not realistic for it to join other schools because of distance.

Choice of LAC leader. All school principals and head teachers are expected to perform the role of a LAC leader. For a single-school LAC, the principal/head teacher of the school becomes the leader.

For a cluster school LAC, the leadership can be rotated among the administrators of the schools in the cluster every five months. During the period that the appointed leader assumes the leadership, the other administrators are not exempted from the LAC sessions. Their presence is critical because they are responsible for monitoring the learning progress of their teachers as well as in following up the progress of their teachers' individual action plans. Moreover, the LAC leader will need their assistance in the implementation of the Instructional Programme.

Organizing for LAC operation. This refers to the first session which the LAC must hold in order to define the group's common objectives, the roles of members in achieving these objectives, setting norms and helpful mechanisms to make the LAC a functional structure for non-formal training.

Because this is the first meeting of the LAC, it is important that all the identified members and leaders are present. The trainer-in-charge is expected to manage the meeting.

To ensure 100 per cent attendance and maximum participation in the meeting, the members are informed well ahead of time about the date, time, venue and agenda for the meeting. The members (teachers and principals) are required to bring the LAC plans which they formulated during their formal training.

The District Supervisor's presence is significant in this meeting because:

1. The meeting marks the launching of the school LAC and it is his responsibility to formalize it.
2. He should know the starting point of every LAC in his district.
3. He should provide moral support to the teachers and more specially to the LAC leader.

After this initial meeting, the trainer-in-charge prepares the LAC leader for the next meeting, which will concern planning for LAC operation. The trainer-in-charge sets the model for the LAC leader in the first session.

Planning for LAC operation. This is the task that the LAC must undertake in its second meeting/session. It involves planning of specific activities that the group must undertake, programming of LAC sessions both organizational and instructional, identification of resources needed, and the responsibilities of each member in order to make the Instructional Programme work.

The planning for LAC operation is influenced by the Instructional Programme design and requirements. The Programme consists of two curricula, namely, (1) the general curriculum, which covers beliefs/values and collaborative skills; and (2) the technical curriculum, which focuses on the enhancement of teaching skills. The content areas of the two curricula are spread over a two-year cycle.

The following requirements are taken into consideration in the scheduling or programming of the LAC sessions:

1. The LAC is to complete two learning episodes every month. Each episode is allowed a total of four hours of contact sessions.
2. A regular review of the LAC operation should be built into the implementation of the Instructional Programme. This means that the LAC session on the fifth month must allocate two additional hours for this purpose.

The LAC leader is reminded not to assume that the LAC is ready to implement the Instructional Programme after the scheduling of LAC sessions is accomplished. For the first five months of its operation, the LAC must come up with an action plan. This activity is repeated after every five months in preparation for the succeeding terms within the two-year cycle.

The meeting on planning for LAC operation is considered complete only when the LAC has agreed on: (1) the LAC session scheme; (2) the schedule of LAC sessions; and (3) the 5-month Implementation Plan. The outputs of this meeting are submitted to the District Supervisor and to the trainer-in-charge.

Innovative features of the school LAC

1. *It is a training delivery system that is permanent and self-managed.*

Unlike other training delivery systems, the school LAC is a training system where the training participant is involved in making decisions on the training/learning targets and priorities. These priorities are set, based on what he/she perceived as his/her job performance difficulties. The participant is likewise allowed to take an active role in the planning and management of the agreed-upon training activities as well as in the evaluation and review of the decisions made. This strategy also allows the participants to monitor each other's learning progress as well as the progress of accomplishing assigned tasks relative to managing their non-formal training operations. Their involvement in the entire process enhances the members' sense of ownership.

2. *It is action-focused*

The school LAC provides for immediate application of learning to the actual classroom situation. This is contained in the action plans made by the members. Such a process becomes the integration tool for the learning-action concept of the school LAC. The progress of this action plan is monitored by the trainers through the regular submission of status reports required of every LAC. Updates on the LAC learning sessions are also included in the report.

3. *It is a staff development activity* which utilizes the Adult Learning Approach.

4. *The goal is both the personal development of the teacher and that of the pupils under her care.*

The skills that the teacher acquires through the school LAC are not only geared towards her personal and professional development, but more importantly, the improvement of her teaching competencies which will be beneficial to the pupils under her care.

Phases of LAC development

There are basically three phases of LAC development and operations, namely, pre-organization, organization and maintenance. At each phase, various kinds of assistance and support have to be solicited from different MECS officials involved in the LAC.

Pre-organization. During this phase, besides the planning for setting up the school LAC by the targetted teachers and their principals, the preparation for the distribution of LAC materials for the actual conduct of lessons takes place.

The following LAC actors undertake these corresponding activities during the pre-organization phase:

a) *Elementary Education Division Chief.* Organizes information dissemination activities for the formation of LACs in the region.

b) *Division Superintendent.* Issues all necessary administrative directives and communications to facilitate LAC organization/operations; organizes LAC orientation activities for the division.

c) *District supervisor.* Provides for official meeting time of LACs; makes sure school LAC members attend meetings.

d) *LAC leader.* Co-ordinates with LAC participants concerning LAC schedule, venue, etc.

e) *LAC members.* Co-ordinate with LAC leader on schedule, venue, etc.

Organization. This is the phase when the school LAC has become active and has conducted formal sessions using LAC instructional materials. During this phase, various MECS officials and personnel are either directly or indirectly involved in the actual running of the LAC sessions. Their involvement is as follows:

a) *Elementary Education Division Chief.* Trains subject area supervisors on matters related to the New Elementary School Curriculum.

b) *Subject area supervisors.* Act as resource persons whenever possible; supplement LAC sessions to ensure preparation requirements are met.

c) *Division Superintendent.* Acts as a resource person; provides moral and administrative support.

d) *District supervisor.* Makes himself available as a resource person; provides for storage of LAC materials in district office; monitors the conduct of LAC sessions in the district.

e) *LAC leader.* Facilitates LAC sessions; appoints a LAC member who will take charge of records and files; appoints a co-leader who will assist him and take over whenever necessary; together with group, establishes LAC norms; distributes LAC materials to members; invites resource persons and pays for their services; is responsible for safekeeping of LAC cassette lessons; checks attendance and accomplishment of pre/post session lesson requirements; prepares LAC reports for submission to the trainer-in-charge.

f) *LAC members.* Participate actively in LAC leaders' activities; apply exercises diligently; help implement LAC norms.

Maintenance. This is the phase where supervision and monitoring of the LACs takes place. During this phase, activities for sustaining interest and participation in the LACs are undertaken by MECS personnel, supplementary to the activities done during the organization stage. The actors involved and their respective roles are as follows:

a) *Elementary Education Division Chief.* Reviews LAC performance reports for the region; reviews all evaluation reports; works out accreditation mechanisms.

b) *Subject area supervisors.* Provides opportunities for recognition of outstanding LAC participants' performance; acts as a resource person.

c) *Division Superintendent.* Plans opportunities for recognition of outstanding LACs in the division; incorporates LAC concerns in division meetings; regularly deploys subject area supervisors to school LACs for technical assistance.

d) *District supervisor.* Generates logistic support for LAC projects; solves LAC resource disparity problems in the district; plans for activities to give recognition to outstanding LAC leaders and members; updates division superintendent on LAC progress; organizes LAC promotional activities and inter-LAC projects; incorporates LAC concerns in district meetings.

e) *LAC leader.* Prepares LAC reports for submission to trainer-in-charge; evaluates LAC participants' performance through prescribed methods; initiates the formulation of the LAC's own action project based on a problem where concepts learned in the learning sessions are applicable.

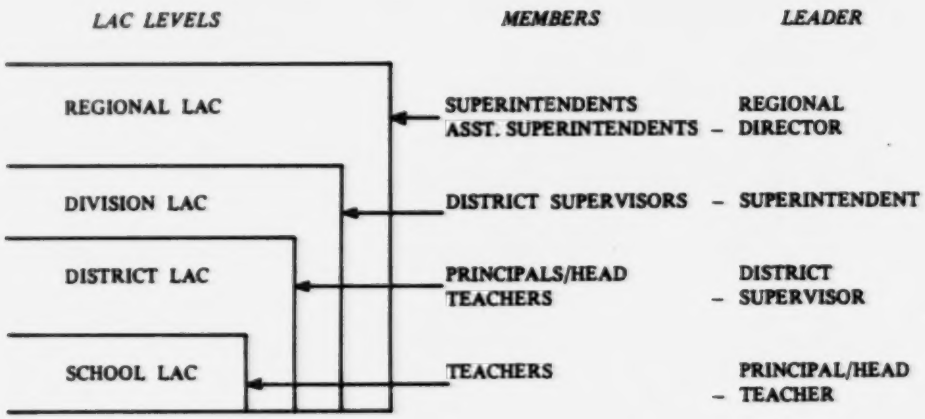
f) *LAC members.* Apply for accreditation of LAC units earned; together with LAC leader, work on school action project; participate in cliniquing and critiquing sessions.

Linkages.

The training delivery system through the Learning Action Cell involves the mobilization, monitoring and maintenance of learning teams or cells, with interlocking membership at each action level. The LAC constitutes the learning base for the skills acquisition and practice. It is, at the same time, the regular forum for collaborative action planning and review in addressing specific instructional concerns.

Figure 1 is a graphic presentation of the Learning Action Cell Organization.

Figure 1. Vertical Links of LACs at Different Levels



The school LAC is linked to the next higher level – the District LAC – through the School LAC leader. The District LAC is composed of principals and head teachers in a given district, with the District Supervisor as the team leader. The team leader links the District LAC to the Division LAC of which he and other district supervisors within a school division are members. Other members of the Division LAC are division supervisors and the assistant schools division superintendent in a given schools division. The Division level LAC has for its leader the schools superintendent of the Division.

The highest level LAC in the hierarchy is the Regional LAC which consists of superintendents, regional supervisors and the assistant regional director as members. The LAC leader at this level is the Regional Director. (The Philippines is divided into 13 administrative regions, each headed by a Regional Director).

Vertical linkage is facilitated by the LAC hierarchy because the leader at each lower level is a member of the LAC at the next higher level.

The horizontal network of linkages is facilitated within and between LACs at the same level. Within each LAC for a cluster of schools, communication, interaction and co-operation are facilitated among teachers from the schools comprising the cluster. Members of different LACs can likewise interact and exchange ideas directly where distance is not a constraining factor. The interchange of ideas and participation of teachers in activities of different LACs with common concerns can be facilititated by the school LAC leaders who are members of the same District LAC. During district LAC meetings, school principals share experiences in regard to their areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Besides working as a group, the members of a school LAC are sometimes subdivided into dyads or triads for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of one another's action plan. This scheme is built-in within the conduct of every LAC session.

The School LAC as a resource network

As a network, the LAC scheme can be viewed in three ways: as a resource in itself, as a mobilizer of resources and as a user of resources.

The school LAC is a resource. The varied experiences and competencies of teachers are there to be tapped and shared with others. Undeniably, there are schools which are more adequately equipped than others, and LAC teacher members with more expertise than other members. There are resources which should be tapped and maximally availed of. The network mobilizes the resources by getting the more capable teachers to share their expertise and abilities. It also mobilizes the community. An example could be cited to illustrate this: After taking up a particular teaching episode titled "Creating an Environment Conducive to Learning", the teacher members of a certain LAC came up with actions plans on how to improve the physical structure of their respective classrooms to create a better learning environment for their pupils. To implement their action plans, they mobilized their homeroom Parent-Teachers Association and presented the problem to the

Association. As a result, improvements were made in the classrooms through the financial assistance of the parents.

On topics involving technical expertise not available within the school or district, the school LAC members on their own initiative, invite resource persons from public or private schools who have specialized training on such topics.

As a user of resources, the school LAC is the mechanism for reaching out directly to the school teacher particularly in training on the use of instructional materials and session guides which are centrally prepared and distributed by MECS and the Development Academy of the Philippines.

Monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Besides the informal monitoring done by the LAC members, formal monitoring and follow-up are carried out by specific personnel.

The main objectives of LAC monitoring are:

1. To gather data on LAC operation progress so that persons or units concerned are informed. This information will serve as a basis for making appropriate decisions.
2. To effect action that will improve LAC operations.

The LAC monitoring system involves data gathering, data analysis and validation, decision-making and action. These processes are carried out through: (1) Setting up a reporting system from the LACs up to the central units for data gathering purposes; and (2) Field visits which will allow the monitors to gather first-hand information on difficulties encountered, and the LAC leader's capability in carrying out his role as the organization leader, as learning facilitator, and as the resource mobilizer.

Monitoring is also carried out through ocular inspection in the LAC members' schools. In this way, the monitor is able to see actual application of learnings gained from the non-formal training sessions.

Each school LAC is assigned a trainer-in-charge (TIC) to monitor activities of the team. The TIC collates the regular LAC status reports submitted by the LAC leaders after every session. From the status reports, the trainer draws out a plan of action for monitoring the different LACs assigned to him/her. The TIC visits the LACs regularly and undertakes observations and interviews to determine each LAC's strengths and areas for improvement. Process observation and interviews by an evaluation team help to validate the data contained in the status reports. After the process observation and interview, a feedback session with the LAC members is conducted. On the basis of the feedback, the LAC plan of action is either continued as is, revised, modified or replaced with a new one.

Based on the monitoring visits and the data provided in status reports of the school LACs, the following problems have been identified: (1) facilitating learnings of LAC members; (2) effective supervision of the implementation of the New Elementary School Curriculum; (3) resource mobilization (both people and material resources) to support LAC activities; (4) evaluation of LAC activities and outputs; and (5) effective group leadership.

Chapter Four

THE SCHOOL CLUSTER PILOT PROJECT

by

Sterling Perera*
Director of Education/Policy Co-ordination
Ministry of Education
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Background and rationale

The 1981 White Paper on Educational Proposals for Reforms in Sri Lanka noted these major problems and constraints in the country's educational system:

1. State schools, numbering over 9500 cover a wide range in pupil numbers as well as the facilities provided.

2. The schools compete as separate, individual institutions, firstly for the limited resources provided by the State and secondly, for a clientele among the parents. In this situation, in spite of various regulations on school admission, a few large and rich schools continue to grow larger and richer while the small and poor schools become poorer.

3. There are glaring and wide disparities in the quality of teaching and learning in spite of the fact that a centrally designed common curriculum is followed in all the 9,500 state schools.

In order to remedy the situation, the Paper proposed a cluster approach as one of the remedial methods to overcome some of the above problems.

The concept of school cluster

A school cluster refers to a group of schools located in an identifiable geographical area. Each cluster was envisaged to have a total pupil enrolment of 3,000-5,000. The schools in the cluster are to be managed as a unit sharing the resources to the best advantage.

In adopting this concept, a major deviation from the existing concept was effected. The present system of educational delivery provides for different racial, religious and linguistic schools aimed at catering to the respective sectarian needs.

---

* Mr. W. Sterling Perera was the Director of the Education/Policy Co-ordination Branch of Sri Lanka, before he became the Regional Director of Education. Chilaw.

He received his B.S. from the University of Sri Lanka, majoring in science, and his M.A. from Teachers College Columbia University, New York.

He has actively participated in international conferences on education as well as in Unesco meetings.

In the school cluster concept, identification and determination of educational needs are taken out of such sectarian considerations and are examined in the light of educational needs of the totality of the people living in specific geographical areas.

In establishing and operating the clusters, the sectoral needs, being part of the total needs of a population, are catered to within the cluster framework.

Objectives. Establishment of school clusters aims to:

1. Reduce the existing inequities in the provision of education facilities.
2. Enable schools to be managed by more competent personnel, recognizing the key role of the head of the school.
3. Facilitate collective utilization of resources so that even the smallest of schools would benefit and be able to enjoy the service of better facilities and equipment.
4. Develop an attitude of co-operation amongst the institutions.

This means that there is a deliberate attempt to reduce the under-utilization and unnecessary duplication of specialist teachers, expensive equipment and other facilities, and promote optimum utilization of the available resources. In general, all resources belong to the cluster pool and are available for use by all schools within the cluster.

The core school also organizes a circulation scheme of the books available in the core school library as well as in the cluster libraries.

Functions. The functions of the cluster can be broadly divided into two major areas: (1) Resource allocation activity; and (2) Developing learning programmes. The latter function is related exclusively to the improvement of learning activities while the former is concerned with methods of locating and distributing resources.

Resource allocation activity includes:

1. Surveying resources and needs of the cluster.
2. Sharing of specialized teachers.
3. Sharing of expensive equipment.
4. Exchange of books.
5. Sharing of other materials like sports equipment, etc.
6. Production of supplementary readers.
7. Development of teaching aids.

The activities referred to in 6 and 7 above are the responsibility of the cluster school. Sharing of teacher resource enables the maximum use of specialized teachers, avoidance of unnecessary duplication and under-utilization of teachers.

Under the second area (developing learning programmes), the following are some of the activities undertaken by the cluster:

1. Organization of in-service training programmes for teachers.
2. Special classes for 'A' and 'O' level students in the cluster schools.
3. Organization of curricular programmes.
4. Organization of co-curricular programmes.

Almost all of these activities are to be operated from the cluster school. Hence, there is a great responsibility attached to the cluster school head.

Organizational structure

Each cluster comprises a number of primary schools and several secondary schools. In addition, there may be schools having collegiate grades. The number of different types of schools as well as the grades and streams available within a cluster will be such as will provide the best possible schooling to the community with the resources available. Parents of children in each school in the cluster will be prompted to consider the collective resources of the entire cluster as being at the disposal of their children.

School clusters are encouraged to move toward greater self-reliance so that they may shoulder heavier responsibilities and also be vested with greater authority in regard to the management of the cluster activities.

The large school with secondary grades, which may be regarded as the natural focus of the cluster or that which has the best potential to play such a role, is designated as the core school.

The core school of each cluster will be developed, in general, to have superior laboratory, workshop, library, audio-visual and co-curricular facilities which will be shared by other schools within the cluster. However, where other schools have some facilities more developed than those in the core school, the latter will arrange for optimum sharing of such facilities among schools within the cluster.

Administration. The core school being the natural focus of the cluster and its organizational centre, its principal is also the executive head of the cluster. He is designated the cluster principal because each of the other schools in the cluster has its own principal. The core school provides extra office space and staff to facilitate performance of this function. In order to permit the cluster principal to devote sufficient time for the administration of the cluster as well as the supervision of education in the cluster schools, the core school has an additional principal.

Functions of the cluster principal. The cluster principal functions as head of the school cluster, with the core school as his administrative centre. He is responsible to the District Director of Education for the administration and supervision of education in the schools in the cluster.

The cluster principal plans the development of the whole cluster and identifies the strengths and functions of each of the schools vis-a-vis the cluster. He deploys the teachers in the cluster schools. He supervises and organizes the curricular programmes and the sharing of facilities and equipment within the cluster. He is responsible for requisitioning supplies and drawing up the facilities fees budget. He fulfills his role as Chief Executive of the cluster, recognizing that principals of the schools within the cluster value their independence and that the deveelopment of the cluster is fostered by harmonious relations engendered by a leadership which can enlist co-operation. Principals of schools within a cluster retain as much administrative control of their schools as is permissible to allow the cluster to function as a unit.

The cluster principal has the authority to recommend increments of teachers and recommend minor punishments. He is also given authority as regards use of facilities fees and the transfer of teachers and students within the cluster. He is consulted by the Regional Director of Education in the transfer of teachers to and from the cluster.

Visits to the schools are made by the cluster principal once a month. He is paid an allowance in addition to travelling expenses for these visits.

Mode of operation

Each school cluster has a School Cluster Board with advisory functions. It consists of the cluster principal as chairman, principals of schools and representatives of the School Development Society. Advisory functions of the Board relate to planning of educational activities and their implementation.

Meetings are held once a month. The venue changes on a rotation basis so that each of the schools in the cluster will have an opportunity to host a meeting. The rotation principle enables the cluster principal and the other principals to get a true picture of the schools in their cluster. At each meeting, planning and evaluation of the programmes of the schools take an important place in the agenda. One of the principals is appointed as secretary of the School Cluster Board. Minutes of the meeting are made available to the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education regularly.

Pilot projects

In view of the lack of experience with cluster schools and with a view to develop the concept operationally, pilot work was begun in September 1981. A few observational studies were made from February 1982 to June 1982. It was soon seen that clustering was much different from school mapping for which educational planners had been trained. Because the concept involved fundamental changes, both organizational and interpersonal vis-a-vis the traditional educational supervision staff, the pilot work was in itself a complex undertaking, needing a multi-pronged approach.

Initiation of pilot projects was undertaken through a workshop at which a school mapping exercise was carried out to identify the area, the individual member

schools and the core school. The regional education administrators, the principals of schools and the Ministry representatives participated in this exercise. With the identification and initiation of the clusters, the principals of the schools headed by the core school principals were required to function as a team to:

1. assess the resources that the group of schools in each cluster possess (diagnosis).
2. identify the specific needs of each cluster to improve quality of service (projections of requirements).
3. plan possible gradewise and curricular streamwise rationalization to equalize opportunities and teaching conditions based on accepted norms in the use of teachers and buildings (prospective school map).
4. prepare and plan for a period of three years.

The most significant factor here is that the cluster projects were able to involve, for the first time, principals of the network to collectively plan to meet the educational needs of the area covered by their cluster. In doing this, assistance was provided by the educational administrators and the cluster principal (the principal of the core school) in his role as the leader.

By mid-March 1983, the School Cluster Unit of the Policy Co-ordination Branch of the Ministry of Education had 21 pilot clusters in operation. These involved 225 schools in 10 educational districts. There were close to 105,000 pupils in these schools, roughly 3 per cent of Sri Lanka's school enrolment. The number of schools per cluster ranged from 7 to 15.

The progress of the clusters has not been uniform and has not been dependent on the length of the pilot work that has been going on. Some of the clusters have shown progress far beyond expectations, taking into account the constraints under which the programme is operating. The major factors which, at this stage, appear to correlate with success are the following:

1. The leadership of the cluster principal. However, leadership qualities alone have not been enough. The attitude of the principal towards innovations and his belief in the far-reaching benefits of the cluster scheme have been the major factors which have combined with the leadership qualities in promoting the success of the pilot programme.
2. Close monitoring of the pilot projects by the Ministry unit staff.
3. Committed leadership of the regional authorities.

Changes and innovations effected by the clusters

The changes which have already taken place are:

1. Rationalizations with regard to small grade-wise pupil number units were done on the suggestions made by the committees of principals. The principals were able to perceive the need for such rationalization.

This perception shift was one of the major plusses of clustering. Such a painless rationalization could not have been accomplished under the traditional scheme where removal of the upper grades is perceived as a downgrading of the principal's status.

2. More effective teacher utilization. Schools in Sri Lanka have a serious problem of teacher shortage, a problem aggravated by the lack of rationalization of grades and streams. The school clusters have solved part of the problem by rationalization. Teacher placements within the clusters according to priority needs have been made possible through mutual understanding, on a cluster basis to meet acute shortages in remote rural schools.

3. Requests for new buildings, water and toilet facilities and furniture, are now being done on the basis of actual needs. The lists are drawn up on the basis of the needs of the entire cluster and as such, the needs of the core school do not get automatic priority. One of the early arguments against the cluster scheme was that the core-school principal would use his new powers to further aggrandize the school at the expense of other schools. This was not borne out in the experiences of the pilot clusters at all. The special dynamics created by bringing together the principals of schools – big and small – into a closely built unit had worked mainly to the advantage of the small schools.

4. The leadership as regards improvement of the educational programme of the member schools does not rest with the core school only. Various member schools undertake the development subject-wise.

5. Co-curricular activities have been organized on a cluster basis, cutting across the network of schools, e.g. children of all the schools in the cluster are organized in such a way as to belong to a common system of houses for sports. The clusters help in bringing the teachers, students and parents of different schools together for such events. This is a first experience for a number of small primary schools.

6. Supplementary classes have been organized for schools, making use of available teacher resource in the cluster of schools with leadership given by the core school.

7. Common examinations are held for schools in the cluster. Committees of teachers from the cluster prepare question papers to ensure equalization of standards in the schools.

8. Seminars and demonstration classes have been organized on a cluster basis in order to enhance teaching competencies.

Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

Monitoring and evaluation of the pilot projects are the responsibility of the School Cluster Unit at the central level and of the Regional Director of Education and Co-ordinating Education Officer at the regional level.

Feedback on the operation of activities in the pilot clusters is obtained through:

1. field visits and observations by the monitoring team of the school cluster unit;
2. progress reports from cluster principals; and
3. reports of the Co-ordinating Education Officer and Regional Director of Education at the regional level.

The feedback gathered provides data for remedial measures to be taken in order to improve the implementation of the programme as well as to develop the concept of school clusters further, e.g. sharing of leadership by member schools as regards improvement of educational programmes subject-wise and level-wise so that leadership does not rest with the core school alone.

The experience gained so far indicates that the clustering of schools could be attempted on a country-wide scale except in the case of the very large city schools whose enrolments are already as large as those of clusters and whose feeder districts are too large. The present plan is to use the pilot clusters as exemplars, thereby inducing the people to see the advantages of clustering. If the clustering was done as a mere planning and school mapping exercise, any achievement would have been the result of administrative coercion and therefore not permanent nor truly effective. The strategy of using the pilot-schools cluster as exemplars also gives one opportunity to train those administrators and other cluster-principals through participation in seminars together with the exemplar principals who have their authority of actual experience to advise. Moreover, the solutions to a variety of problems are already available in concrete form so that the actual expansion of the programme to cover the whole country becomes one of mere logistics.

Since the school cluster scheme envisages a change in the school system which requires attitudinal changes on the part of the administrators, the principals, teachers, pupils and the parents, it is of paramount importance to carry out a programme of seminars to carry the message effectively to these various sections. It is not easy to change a century-old concept of a school system overnight and achieve the desired results. If the concept is adequately understood and implemented, and the system implements it with a degree of thoroughness, the resulting efficiencies that could be achieved could have a lasting impact on the management of and the benefits derived from the school system.

Chapter Five

TEACHER STUDY CIRCLES IN JAPAN – TEACHER OPERATED INTER-INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK

By

Shojiro Tamura*
National Institute for Educational Research
Tokyo, Japan

Introduction

Teaching is a dynamic profession. As such, teachers need to keep abreast of the latest knowledge and developments in their areas of specialization and to equip themselves with up-to-date practical skills related to teaching.

In Japan there are three broad ways by which a teacher may continually upgrade his abilities and skills. These are:

1. through actual teaching
2. by attending training courses organized by the Board of Education
3. by becoming a member of independent study circles in his specialized subject area or in other areas.

A teacher who is concerned with improving himself will find he can grow in his subject specialization if he reads up on this discipline both for his own professional improvement and to make the subject he teaches more interesting.

Teachers who can take study leave can take professional courses to upgrade themselves. There are training courses organized by Boards of Education throughout the year. Some of these are offered in the afternoons on weekdays or during the summer vacation. These courses are mostly organized for new teachers. However, when the school is pre-occupied with other programmes, teachers often find it difficult to attend such in-service training courses. Moreover, only a few teachers can be granted leave of absence to attend formal training courses which run for 3 months to one year.

This paper focuses on the teacher study circle as an approach to in-service teacher development.

---

* Mr. Shojiro Tamura has been Chief of the Section on Pupil Guidance and Selection Procedures of the Research Department of NIER, Japan since 1977. He obtained his Master's degree in Psychology from the University of Tokyo in 1955 and has been extensively engaged in research since. He was a resource person for the Mobile Team for Curriculum Development for Thailand under APEID.

The study-circle concept

Study circles are groups of teachers who have a common objective of improving themselves – keeping informed and abreast of developments in a certain area or field of specialization – by co-operative study.

When teachers cannot freely avail of formal in-service courses to develop themselves, they usually seek the third method of upgrading.

In each district, it is the responsibility of the senior teachers to train the newly appointed teacher. However, the former may not always be that well informed in all professional matters pertaining to the school. Hence, there is a need for teachers to co-operate with one another and set up study circles to acquire new information in their specialized subject areas.

Organization. In the study circle, the teachers usually select a principal from one of the schools in the district as their president. A Steering Committee is also organized, its members selected from actual teachers in the district.

The study-circle members are not all equally competent and hard working. The good teachers, however, always get leadership roles in the activities. They get recognition for their exemplary work and become known to other teachers in the school district.

Activities. The activities of different study circles differ from one another by virtue of the nature of the subject areas they are concerned with. For example, the study circles for teachers of physical education usually have frequent activities and the members maintain close contact with one another because they have to plan and carry out inter-school sports matches in the district or in other localities.

Some study circles carry out professional activities and projects. For example, the study circles for guidance teachers have prepared guide books for career guidance teachers and conducted surveys on students in the district. Some members of study circles also participate in the teacher training courses as resource persons on the request of the board of education.

The nature of the activities is also influenced by the localities where the study circles are organized. Similarly, the organizational structure of each study circle could be influenced by the locality.

Every school district in Japan has a teacher study circle. Although study circles are formed by teachers in their capacity as teachers – and hence could be viewed as independent professional organizations – they often receive some financial assistance from the district board of education.

Linkages. The members of study circles are able to help different schools interact with one another. While it is true that study circles are organized around specialized subjects, these subjects have much in common particularly in regard to how they are taught. The presidents of study circles, who are usually school principals, provide links between schools in the district.

Because of the in-service training they provide, the study circles are informally linked with teacher training institutions and with professional organizations. The members of various study circles get together in various meetings and conferences. For example, an annual meeting of the National Co-ordinating Body of Career Guidance Teachers is organized every year in Tokyo. In these meetings, activities of career guidance teachers and problems relating to development of career guidance are usually discussed. The same is most likely the case with study circles for teachers of such subjects as science, mathematics, home economics, etc.

Study circles considerably facilitate communication among teachers from different schools. For teachers who do not have colleagues in their own professional subject in the school, the meetings held as part of study circle activities provide a forum for discussing teaching methods used by different teachers in different localities. The interaction helps in disseminating new ideas and improving one's teaching skills.

Problems. Because of the increasing activities of study circles, two main problems have surfaced. There is a need to increase the budget for activities of study circles. Because of their increasing involvement and participation in teacher in-service growth, it is only appropriate that the Board of Education and the schools provide more funding for study circles. There is also a need for effective scheduling of study circle meetings to maximize teachers' opportunities to attend and participate in these activities.

SELECTED APEID PUBLICATIONS
RELATING TO UNIVERSALIZATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

- *Universalizing education: linking formal and non-formal programmes; report. 1979.*
- *Universalizing education: strategies for development and use of instructional materials; report. 1979.*
- *Universalizing education: selected innovative experiences: new techniques for preparing educational personnel. 1980.*
- *New personnel profiles in relation to changes in society and educational systems. 1980.*
- *In-service teacher education: developing innovatory strategies and instructional materials; report. 1980.*
- *Designing instructional materials for general education and teacher training: a portfolio of experiences in Asia and Oceania. 1980.*
- *Preparing educational personnel: training methodologies based on locally available learning resources; report. 1980.*
- *Linking science education in real-life; curriculum design, development and implementation; report. 1980.*
- *Towards better health and nutrition; report. 1981.*
- *Social changes and new profiles of educational personnel; national studies: India, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1981.*

  Report of the study group meeting on evaluation and development of innovative methods of teaching with reference to problems of multiple classes and disadvantaged groups. 1981.

  Integrating subject areas in primary education curriculum—a joint innovative project; report. 1982.
- *Distance learning for teacher education; report. 1982 (3 vols.)*

  Multiple class teaching and education of disadvantaged groups; national studies: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1982.

  Learning needs and problems in primary education; report. 1983 (2 vols).

  Training of educational personnel for integrated curriculum; report. 1984.

  Towards universalization of primary education in Asia and the Pacific: country studies (of 12 countries) and a regional overview. 1984.

  Mutual co-operation for schools development; some experiences from Asia and the Pacific; report. 1985.

---

* Out of stock.

The Asia and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) has as its primary goal to contribute to the building of national capabilities for undertaking educational innovations linked to the problems of national development, thereby improving the quality of life of the people in the Member States.

All projects and activities within the framework of APEID are designed, developed and implemented co-operatively by the participating Member States through over one hundred national centres which they have associated for this purpose with APEID.

The 25 Member States participating in APEID are Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga and Turkey.

Each country has set up a National Development Group (NDG) to identify and support educational innovations for development within the country and facilitate exchange between countries.

The Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development (ACEID), an integral part of the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, co-ordinates the activities under APEID and assists the Associated Centres (AC) in carrying them out.

The programme areas under which the APEID activities are organized during the third cycle (1982-1986) are:

1. Universalization of education: access to education at first level by both formal and non-formal means;
2. Education for promotion of scientific and technological; competence and creativity;
3. Education and work;
4. Education and rural development;
5. Educational technology with stress on mass media and low-cost instructional materials;
6. Professional support services and training of educational personnel;
7. Co-operative studies and innovative projects of research and research-based experimentation related to educational development.